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Berkeley, California

Golden Gate Audubon Society

# THE GULL



## HELP SAVE MIGRATORY BIRDS TWO WAYS TO CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY!

### MARATHON PROPERTY CELEBRATION AND TOUR East Bay, Friday, May 7

Take a break for lunch and join GGAS to receive a big THANK YOU from the East Bay Regional Park District for purchase of the Marathon property in Hayward. With your help, GGAS was able to donate \$10,000 to the EBRPD toward the purchase of Marathon. It is a piece of valuable wetland habitat, home to thousands of migratory shorebirds and waterfowl. The property was slated for development; it is now protected as park district land. A thank you celebration will be held at the Martin Luther King Regional Shoreline (Arrowhead Marsh, formerly San Leandro Shoreline Park), **Friday, May 7, 12:30-1:30 p.m.** Guest speakers will include National Audubon representatives, the EBRPD and local political leaders. Refreshments and an optional field trip to the Marathon property are included. Come celebrate and see for yourself this valuable migratory bird habitat on the San Francisco Bay. Call GGAS at 843-2222 for details.

### AUDUBON ART AUCTION AND MORE! San Francisco, Saturday, May 8 Fort Mason Fire House

GGAS is celebrating International Migratory Bird Day with an Art Auction "From Nature to the Avantgarde." Proceeds will help support the Point Reyes Bird Observatory's Neotropical Migratory Bird Monitoring courses for Latin American biologists and GGAS' program for school children in the Bay Area,

*(continued on page 78)*

### COME TO OUR MAY PROGRAM: DR. LAYMON RETURNS

Our May program will feature Dr. Steve Laymon discussing the "Conservation Biology Research Projects of the Kern River Research Center." The program will begin at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, May 13 in Berkeley at the Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda.

The Kern River Research Center (KRRC) was established in 1990 to conduct research and publish

*(continued on page 78)*

## MAY MEETING

(continued from page 77)

findings in the area of conservation biology of, primarily, rare and endangered bird species and the habitat on which they depend. The KRRC is located along the South Fork of the Kern River near Weldon, Kern County. It has ongoing projects on the Nature Conservancy's Kern River Preserve, the Sacramento River and in other areas of the state.

This presentation by Dr. Laymon is an up-to-date potpourri of the conservation biology being conducted by the KRRC around California. Topics that will be covered include conservation biology, Spotted Owl, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Willow Flycatcher, riparian restoration and bird use, and more. Dr. Laymon presented a program last year at our San Francisco location on the Yellow-billed Cuckoo that was very popular. This is an encore presentation, and then some.

Steve Laymon is director and co-founder of the Kern River Research Center. He completed his doctoral research on Spotted Owl habitat requirements, studied the biogeography of riparian bird communities for his MS degree. He is considered the world authority on the Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

Join us for this truly informative and entertaining speaker.

—JOELLE BUFFA

## FIRE HOUSE

(continued from page 77)

Audubon Aventures. (Artists include Julia Alland, M. Graham Blake, Tupper Ansel Blake, Dennis Beale, Claire Cotts, Mary Hambleton, Keith Hansen, Alan Hopkins, Rachel Lazo, Alexandria Levin, Deborah Oropallo, Kelly Veilleux, Sophie Webb, Ann White, Debey Zito, and more.)

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

**9 a.m.-noon:** Five Birding Field Trips in and around San Francisco (see p. 82).

### AT THE FIRE HOUSE

**12-1:30 p.m.:** Wine, hors d'oeuvres and desserts

**1-1:30 p.m.:** Silent Auction (minimum bids posted for each item).

**1:30-2:15 p.m.:** Slide presentation by PRBO on Neotropical Migratory Bird Monitoring in Mexico courses for Mexican biologists (a joint venture of PRBO, Smithsonian MBC, USFWS, SEDUE & Pronatura-Chiapas).

## ANNUAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16th

Again our annual meeting will be a picnic at Tilden Park in Berkeley. *The GULL* for June will include details, but save the date.

Send address changes to office promptly; Post office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$30 per year (individual); \$38 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$10 per year; single issues \$1. High school and college student membership \$20 per year. Senior citizen individual \$21, senior citizen family \$23. Associate Membership in Golden Gate Audubon Society, \$10 per year.

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*The Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month, and July 15th for September issue.

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## FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR

**Sunday, May 2**—Wildcat Canyon Regional Park. (Malcolm Sproul)

**Saturday, May 8**—Migratory Bird Day Field Trips (see page 82).

**Saturday, May 8**—Bouverie Audubon Preserve. (Reservations required by April 30.) (Leader: Docent)

**Saturday, May 8**—Birding by Ear, Briones Regional Park. (Dave Cornman)

**Wednesday, May 12**—Mini-trip to Briones Regional Park. (Wilcox/Spoelman)

For details on the above trips see *The GULL* for April.

**Saturday, May 15**—Beginners' Trip to Mountain Lake, San Francisco. Meet in the parking lot at the end of 15th Ave. (just north of Lake St.) at 8 a.m. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them. We expect to see three or four species of swallows plus a variety of waterbirds and landbirds during this two-hour walk. Leader: Ivan Samuels (415/387-1602).

**Saturday, May 15**—Mt. Diablo State Park. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Rock City parking lot—one mile after passing through the South Gate entrance station. Take Hwy. 24 to Walnut Creek then go south on I-680 to Danville. Take the Diablo Rd. exit, go left under the freeway and follow signs to Mt. Diablo State Park.

We will look for Rufous-crowned and Sage Sparrows, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, swifts, swallows, woodpeckers and warblers. Riparian habitat should be good this year! Bring lunch and liquids. Trip ends about 1 p.m. Leader: David George (510) 339-0765. \$ (✓)

**Friday-Sunday, June 4-6**—Birding by Ear in Yosemite. The lower and middle elevations of Yosemite National Park are alive with singing birds in early June. A variety of habitats support a rich diversity of birdlife, typically including seven flycatchers (four Em-

pidonax) three vireos, seven warblers, and many other species in full song and breeding plumage. Meet at the Big Oak flat entrance on Friday, June 4 at 3 p.m., and Saturday, June 5 at 7 a.m. (If you arrive later Saturday morning, meet the group in Hodgdon Meadow behind the Hodgdon Meadow Group Campsites.) The meeting place is the large parking lot 100 yards inside the park entrance on Hwy. 120.

Nearby campgrounds include Hodgdon Meadow (res. required) and Crane Flat in the Park, Carlon and Middle Fork (primitive Forest Service) on the road to Hetch Hetchy, and Sweetwater on Hwy. 120. Lodging on Hwy. 120 includes Yosemite Gatehouse (209/379-2260), Evergreen Lodge (209/379-2606), Lee's Middle Fork (209/962-7408), and Buck Meadows Lodge (209/962-6366). The meeting place is 30 miles from Yosemite Valley.

Bring warm clothes, raingear, rubber boots (wet meadows), be prepared to pack a lunch and walk about six miles. Leader: Dave Cornman (510) 825-2106) \$ (✓)

**Wednesday, June 9**—Mini-trip to Redwood Regional Park. Meet in the park at 9:30 a.m. Take the Warren Freeway (Hwy. 13), exit onto Redwood Rd. and proceed east about three miles to Redwood Gate, southern entrance to the park. Meet just inside small parking lot on the left. Bring lunch. We should see Black-headed Grosbeak, Swainson's Thrush, Northern Oriole, Solitary, Hutton's and Warbling Vireos. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301, and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

**Saturday-Sunday, June 19-20**—Yuba Pass and vicinity. On Saturday meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Yuba Pass Summit parking area (Hwy. 49) 15 miles east of Sierra City. Take I-80 to Truckee, go north on Hwy. 89 to Sier-raville and take Hwy. 49 west to Yuba Summit. (Or take Hwy. 49 northeast

from Auburn for a slower but more scenic route.) We will bird the mountain areas for summer residents including dippers, flycatchers, warblers and Calliope Hummingbirds.

On Sunday meet at 8 a.m. at the intersection of Hwy. 49 and 89 (by the saw mill) about 1 mile north of Sattley. We will caravan to Sierra Valley and look for many of the birds of the eastern Sierra including White-faced Ibis, Sandhill Cranes, Sage Thrashers and Yellow-headed Blackbirds.

Camping is available at the following U.S. Forest Service campgrounds off Hwy. 49: Wild Plum (elev. 3300') 2 mi. east of Sierra City, and Chapman Creek (elev. 5800') 8 mi. east of Sierra City. Lodging is available at Sierra City: Sierra Chalet (916-862-1110), Buttes Motel (916-862-1170), Herrington's Sierra Pines (916-862-1151), Basset Station Motel (916-862-1297), Sierra Buttes Inn Motel (916-862-1191), and Yuba River Inn (916-862-1122). Leader: Peter Allen (415) 892-8063. (✓)

**Trips marked with \$** go to parks and other sites that require an entrance fee.

**Carpooling** arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (✓).

**Problems:** If you need a ride or can take a passenger, or if you need information and have difficulty contacting a field trip leader, call Russ Wilson, Field Trips Committee Chmn. (510) 524-2399.

#### **Plan Ahead:**

**June 25-27**—Lassen Volcanic National Park. Leaders: Dan and Joan Murphy.

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

## **MONO LAKE BREEDING BIRD COUNT**

Saturday, June 12 is the date set for the 1993 effort. For the last five years there has been a breeding bird count at Mono Lake. The survey is based on the

count circle used for the Christmas Count, centered at Lee Vining. It includes much of the western shore of Mono Lake and parts of Lundy and Lee Vining Canyons.

In mid-June birds should be at the height of song and activity. Abundant Mono Lake species include Green-tailed Towhees, Sage Thrashers, House Wrens, Red-breasted Sapsuckers and Brewers Sparrows. Rarities seen on this count include Chimney Swift, Common Tern, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Black-and-white and Magnolia Warblers.

Much still needs to be learned about the avifauna of this beautiful area. Your help is needed. The count is followed by a pot-luck at 6 p.m. at the Mono Lake County Park on Cemetery Rd. about four miles north of Lee Vining.

Plan on a half day to full day hiking. Conditions are usually cold and windy. Participants need a working knowledge of the common birds. Bring food, water and a clipboard. A spotting scope and 4WD vehicles would be useful. Call Emilie at (510) 525-5761 for more information.

## **THE BURROWING OWL NEEDS YOU!**

This is the final year in a three-year survey to determine the breeding status of Burrowing Owl in central California. The results will be used to help qualify the owl for Endangered Species status. Populations of Burrowing Owl have declined precipitously in recent years so protection for the owl is critical.

Volunteers are needed to survey potential owl habitat this May and early June. No expertise in Burrowing Owl is required; only a willingness to search carefully for the birds. Since they are "daytime" owls, all survey work can be done during daylight hours. Survey areas will be located in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties and will require

about two days in the field to cover.

If you would like to combine some birding with this important conservation effort call Mark Homrighausen at (510) 528-9339.

## MARCH OBSERVATIONS

Working on a breeding bird atlas points up the fact that there are different ways of finding birds. When you go in search of vagrant land birds, you trust to luck and look for isolated stands of trees and vegetation that "catch" and concentrate nocturnal migrants as they seek places of respite at the end of a long night's journey. The quest for breeding birds also begins with an eye toward habitat, but a more intensive and analytical eye. Specific species are known to prefer specific habitats so a given area would be surveyed first for vegetation and a list of possible species would be compiled for each discrete habitat zone; then the search commences to confirm the presence of expected species. The fun begins when you extrapolate and conjure up species not presently known to nest locally but for which the proper habitat exists. Take Hermit Thrush, a locally wintering species that heads upslope to higher, cooler altitudes with moist forests in the summer: they nest along Bolinas Ridge in Marin County so might they also nest in cool canyons in the East Bay hills? It's a doubtful proposition, but one worth exploring. This is certainly the flip side to the vagrant search—the search for the expected in contrast to the search for the unexpected. They're both fun; both valid.

\* \* \* \* \*

An early spring Monterey Bay pelagic trip on the 27th was fruitful: six Black-footed and one Laysan Albatross; a Northern Fulmar; 250 Sooty, twenty-five Pink-footed, one Flesh-footed and ten Black-vented Shearwaters; ten Pomerine Jaegers and

a Xantus' Murrelet (DLSh). There were additional Northern Fulmar, Black-vented Shearwater and Pomerine Jaeger sightings along the San Mateo coast during the month (RSTh, MFe, JM). On the 27th, a single observer at Pigeon Point spotted a possible Crested Auklet (MFe). If accepted, it would be the first California record for this species.

The Cattle Egret reports are diminishing as the winter draws to a close. At least one Tufted Duck is still being reported from Golden Gate Park (mob); another from Foster City (mob). The female **King Eider** was seen once again at Humboldt Bay on the 25th with a second reported at Ano Nuevo on the 27 and 28 (GJS). There were Oldsquaws at Stinson Beach (DB), Point Reyes (WT) and San Leandro Bay (LRF).

Lesser Golden-Plovers, up to fourteen at Point Reyes (WT, FGB, BGr) and another two at the mouth of Pescadero Creek (RSTh, SR), continued to be seen. Early word from the AOU is that the two races, *fulva* and *dominica*, are finally about to be separated officially, years after the British did so. We get a few *dominica* passing through in the early fall on the way to their wintering grounds in Argentina and we have a small population of wintering *fulva* the most notable example of which is the group at the Spaletta Plateau at Point Reyes.

Either we have a mini invasion of Laughing Gulls, or, more likely, the individual that spent the winter at Lake Mendocino has moved to Lakeport—not far, but a change in county for those who keep track of those things (JRW). The **Common Black-headed Gull** reappeared at Arcata on the 21st (fide JCS); there were Glaucous Gulls at Palo Alto (SR), Princeton (BJ), Alviso (SR, AME) and Pigeon Point (MFe fide RSTh).

Greater Roadrunners are always a target bird on Mines road but years can

go by between sightings when groups do their annual field trips in April and early May. It now appears perhaps earlier is better—a pair was displaying in a tree, cooing back and forth, on March 14 and was seen again later in the month (JM, JMR, SMO). Another individual was reported from Del Puerto Canyon Rd. on the 26th (SMO). The Northern Saw-whet Owl remained in the trees at the Point Reyes Lighthouse through the 28th (mob); another was in the Fish Dock trees on April 4 (RS). In Berkeley, the Williamson's Sapsucker was replaced by a Red-naped Sapsucker on the 6th (JSC, mob).

Those who like to indulge in small games were able to chalk up a Big Phoebe Day as Eastern Phoebes remained in Davis and Livermore (mob). There was a Cassin's Kingbird on Mines Rd. on the 16th (JMR, JMS). Single Sage Thrashers continued to be seen in Alameda (mob) and along Little Panoche Road (KM). From Ferndale, last reports of the **Blue-winged Warbler** were March 3rd and the American Tree Sparrow, March 13th (mob). A Summer Tanager popped up in San Francisco on the 7th (LLu); and a Green-tailed Towhee, a Great Basin bird, frequented a feeder in Martinez from February 10 to March 2 (DK). A very dull female Lapland Longspur did its best to confound a group of birders at Point Reyes on the 21st (AD). And a single Red Crossbill in Concord (GL) and a single Evening Grosbeak in Point Reyes Station (JDi, GB) round out the month and emphasize the fact that this is not an irruptive year for montane species.

**OBSERVERS:** Florence G. Bennett, Dix Boring, Gordon Bryan, J. Scott Cox, Ann Dewart, Jack Dineen, Alan M. Eisner, Leora R. Feeney, Mike Feighner, Marc Fenner, Betty Groce, W. Edward Harper, Joan M. Humphrey, Debby Kirshen, Bill Jones,

Gayle Langton, Leslie Lieurance, Kevin Monahan, Joe Morlan, Scott Morrical, Jean M. Richmond, Steve Rotterborn, Debra Love Shearwater, Dan Singer (DSg), Jean-Marie Spoelman, John C. Sterling, Gary J. Starchan, Kirk Swenson, Ronald S. Thorn, Walter Tordoff, Martha Vaughan, Jerry R. White, Anna Wilcox. Data thanks to Joe Morlan and the Northern California Rare Bird Alert.

—ANN DEWART

## MIGRATORY BIRD DAY FIELD TRIPS

**Saturday, May 8**—Join us to welcome migratory birds back to San Francisco and bid farewell to our winter birds on one of five trips.

Trips begin at 9 a.m. and end at noon. After the field trips we will join the celebration at Fort Mason for food, a count down, art auction and slide show.

**THE PRESIDIO**—Meet at the Arguello gate at Arguello Blvd. and West Pacific Ave. Leaders: Jan Andersen and Mary Louise Rosegay.

**SEAL ROCKS/LANDS END.** Meet at the Merrie Way parking lot off Point Lobos Ave. Leader: Alan Hopkins.

**GOLDEN GATE PARK.** Meet at the main entrance to Strybing Arboretum on Martin Luther King Dr. near 9th Ave. Leader: Allan Ridley.

**LAKE MERCED/FORT FUNSTON**—Meet on the concrete bridge between John Muir Dr. and Lake Merced Blvd. at the south end of Lake Merced. Leader: Scott Cox.

**GLEN CANYON PARK**—Meet at Diamond St. and Chenery St. above the tennis courts. Leader: Dan Singer.

For more information call Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983.



## OBSERVATIONS ON MARBLED MURRELETS NEEDED

Investigators looking into the status of the Marbled Murrelet urgently need help from people who have made observations of the species in the past. Now underway is a cooperative effort, known as the **Marbled Murrelet Conservation Assessment**, to determine the present status of the murrelet, its past history, and future prognosis. Participating in this effort are biologists and scientists from throughout the species' range, including all federal and state agencies, many non-governmental organizations, and private interests. An important part of the process of determining the bird's present status is the compilation of all known sightings of the species in its ocean habitat. Especially helpful would be *quantitative* surveys done from boats or from shore. An example would be numbers of murrelets recorded on a cruise in the inland passage of Alaska, on a pelagic trip off the northern California coast, or on a fishing trip along the British Columbia coast. We are interested in information at any time in the past, the older the better. Anyone knowing of even a single day's survey that recorded the numbers of murrelets, with some indication of the course taken, should contact: Dr. C. John Ralph, Marbled Murrelet Conservation Assessment, Redwood Sciences

Laboratory, 1700 Bayview Drive, Arcata, California 95521 (Telephone (707) 822-3691; FAX (707) 826-0474).

## PURPLE MARTIN

To meet the needs of the California Department of Fish and Game, and for research interests of his own, Brian Williams is hoping to document the historical and present distribution of the Purple Martin in California. He needs any records of Purple Martin nest sites and migratory staging areas. As much as possible of the following is requested: location (County and nearest town, name of property owner, elevation, and detailed site directions (photocopied topographical maps are excellent); numbers of individuals (or pairs or nests); stage of breeding cycle; nest substrate; reproductive success; habitat type, including condition and proximity to water; presence of Starlings; and any other comments believed useful. Please send the information to Brian Williams, P.O. Box 605, Loomis CA 95650. For further information you may call him at (916) 624-4861.



## CONSERVATION NOTES

### SEND A MESSAGE:

### SAVE OUR WETLANDS!

To those of us concerned about wetlands, Bill Clinton's inauguration brought hope. After the attacks Bush and Quayle made on wetlands (Quayle's definition would have eliminated over half of remaining wetlands from regulatory protection) came Louisiana democrat Jimmy Hayes bill which was even worse. It garnered 170 co-sponsors and only efforts of the environmental community convinced Congress that it was not, as it was presented, a positive wetlands bill.

Then, Rep. Don Edwards came to the rescue with a good wetlands bill, drafted with environmentalist consultation. That bill, HR 1455, with over 70 co-sponsors, helped stop the Hayes steamroller. The session ended in a standoff.

Mr. Edwards has introduced a revised version now called "The Wetlands Reform Act of 1993," HR 350, with 60 co-sponsors. Mr. Hayes bill, also reintroduced, has 52 co-sponsors. Perhaps the tide has turned. Perhaps we can get positive wetlands legislation passed this term. At stake is an annual loss of 300,000 acres nationally including precious Bay Area wetlands.

But there is still reason to fear developers and oil companies and other wetlands destroyers with millions of lobbying dollars will get a bill through Congress that will put wetlands at risk.

What is needed is leadership from the White House. Strong public support by the President for wetlands protection is critical. This may not be easy to get because Louisiana's Rep. Hayes and Senator John Breaux are influential Democrats, and they have an anti-wetland agenda. Senator Breaux' bill in the Senate was as bad as the Hayes bill.

To assure leadership from the Ad-

ministration word must come from the constituency—all of us—that wetlands protection policy must take a high priority. Call him at (202) 456-1414 and leave a message or write President Bill Clinton, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500.

The President has to hear from us because the pressures for "compromise solutions" are enormous. If you have questions, call the GGAS office (510) 843-2222 or Arthur Feinstein, at home, evenings at (415) 282-5937.

### FELINE FIX BILL

Write your State Senator and Assemblyman in support of spaying or neutering of free roaming cats. AB 302 is supported by GGAS and many Audubon chapters, the California Veterinary Medicine Association, the Humane Society, among others. It is intended to reduce the feral cat population, the desirability of which you have read in *The GULL* repeatedly.

The Fund for Animals reports that 60% or unaltered household cats end up living in feral colonies within three years. If cat owners have their cats neutered or spayed the cat is more likely to remain at home. If it does leave it will not add to the wild population beyond itself. The bill would make it an infraction for owners to allow cats outdoors if not sterilized.

### BLACK BEARS

Senator Nicholas Petras has introduced SB 67 which bans the practice of chasing black bears with dogs for sport hunting. Colorado (by a vote of 71%) and several other states have banned this cruel "sport." At present, three-quarters of the bears killed in California are hunted with hounds. Use of hounds for poaching is apparently widespread. Protection is needed and this is a reasonable and sound approach to conserving a species.

## BOBCAT

SB 380 is supported by the Mountain Lion Foundation, and is needed to protect bobcats in California. Trapping for fur has been taking an average of 6,300 bobcats each year over the last decade. This top-level predator is important in the economy of nature, eating rodents and thereby controlling that population.

The bill will make the bobcat a "specially protected" mammal like the mountain lion. It is opposed by trapper's, sportsmen's and cattlemen's associations. A public outcry is needed to overcome the obstacles in the way of passage of SB 389.

## NATIONAL BOTTLE BILL

A letter to each of our U.S. Senators would be helpful in supporting a national bottle bill. The Clinton administration is in support of the idea, and the time is ripe. The bill was introduced on Earth Day.

A letter to the editor of your local newspaper would be useful, too.

## ROBERTS LANDING STATUS

If the acronym counts, the Committee for Alameda's Last Marshland (CALM) sounds like a determined and effective organization. It opposes a 79 acre (760 unit!) development on the Bay and urges letters be sent to:

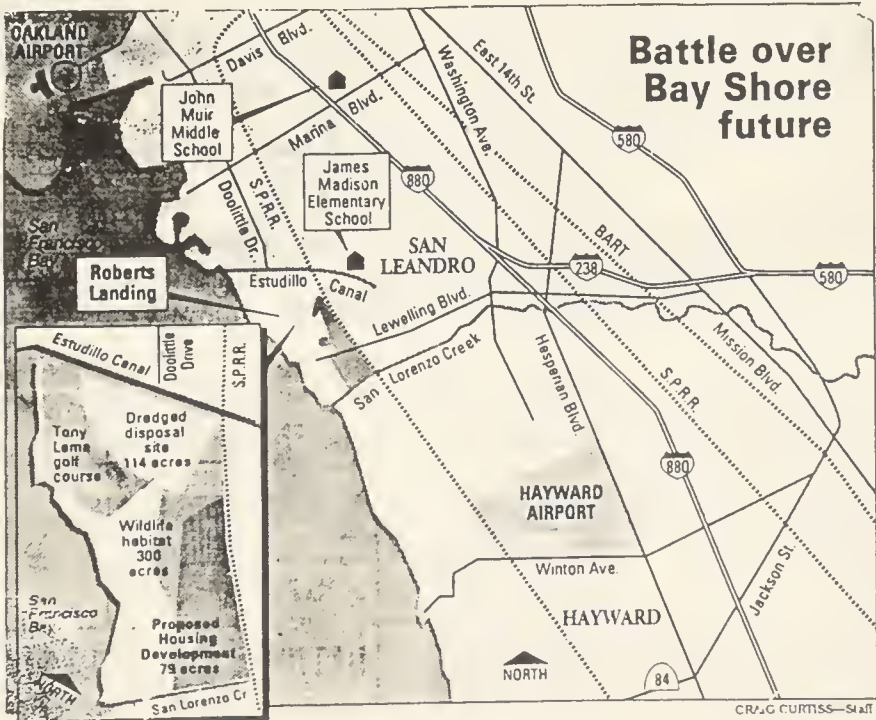
Charles Warren, Executive Officer  
State Lands Commission

1807 13th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814  
and

Alan Pendleton, Director  
SF Bay Conservation & Development Commission  
30 Van Ness Ave., Suite 2011  
San Francisco, CA 94102

CALM writes "Our struggle to save Roberts Landing from the Citation Homes development is not over. We do plan to file an appeal of Judge Parrilli's decision in the City/Citation v. Sierra Club case.

Letters of protest should make the following points: 1) No permits should be issued until all information and documents are made public. 2) A public hearing should be held. 3) Ask when the



Citation Homes Public Participation Plan will be made public.

The public has not been allowed access to or opportunity to comment on the numerous submissions made by the City and the developer. Public review of the facts in this matter has been blocked. For more information call CALM at (510) 352-6731.

## BACK YARD BIRDER

In 1965 it was estimated that there were from 3 to 8 million birders, i.e. people who enjoyed watching birds as a pastime. The numbers have surely increased with the world's heightened awareness of nature and the environment. No one knows the ages of birders but it is hoped that there are young people who will continue the birdwatching legacy. My son and daughter, in their 30's, have a keen interest but as yet haven't the time to get seriously involved. However, my 14-month-old grandson knows an owl says, "Hoo, Hoo, HOOOOOO!" In England, birding has always been a popular hobby and is encouraged among school children. Because of cutbacks in our schools' fund, it will be up to us older bird enthusiasts to generate interest among the younger generation.

Today's birders are much more sophisticated than their counterparts in the early days when a birder's best friend was his shotgun. "What's hit is history; what's missed is a mystery" was a common expression in the 1700's and 1800's. Then, America was a world full of new species of birds to be identified. Because of poor communications between students of birds and because there was no reliable book on bird life, bird study was arduous. In 1808 Wilson came out with *American Ornithology*, a big help. And with the advent of better optics and cameras, gradually the guns were set aside in order to study living birds in the field. Books began to appear which stressed identification.

Born in New York City in 1890, Ludlow Griscom is considered the father of modern field identification. As a young boy he had been embarrassed at a Linnaean Society meeting when he misidentified a bird by its call alone. He decided then to become a reliable observer and to try to develop a scientific way to identify birds by sight and sound in the field. He became adept at both sight and sound as well as bird behavior and soon had a following of proteges, including Roger Tory Peterson. At the same time, in the west, Ralph Hoffman was writing *Birds of the Pacific States* which appeared in 1927. (I've mentioned before that I prize my copy of this out-of-print book because of Hoffman's descriptions of both behavior and song.) We all know that Peterson created the first "portable" (i.e. compact) field guides, *Field Guide to Birds* (1934) and *Field Guide to Western Birds* (1941). His new editions are marvelous.

Elliott Coues, a major ornithologist in the late 1800's, stated, "The Double-barrelled shotgun is your main reliance" when counselling beginners. Without a "bird-in the hand" your identification in olden days would simply not be believed. Today, happily, we can confirm bird sightings with camera and film. Bird identification has become a science with specialists in various species such as gulls (a lifetime of challenges, in my mind!), hawks, and shorebirds. In separating similar species, a birder uses his knowledge of color, pattern, shape, size, voice, habitat and behavior. e.g. Birders have noted differences in wing- and tail-flicking among EMPIDONAX flycatchers, in head shapes of gulls, and flight characteristics of storm-petrels. All of these useful facts help us, the ordinary garden-variety, back yard birders.

So, go forth and ...identify!

MEG PAULETICH

## BIRD OF THE YEAR

### Cries "What Peeves You?"

There is a bird from South America visiting our parks and yards. It will not be reported on the rare bird alert, at least not yet. When we think of birds from South America, birds with vivid colors come to mind. But this bird's name is the most colorful thing about it. To describe it as drab would not be inaccurate. But animals with dull colors frequently live colorful lives, and to dismiss them because of their appearance is a mistake.

You may have seen this bird. It's about 7½ inches in length with a large peaked head and fairly short tail. The bill is black with a little yellow on the lower mandible. The throat is a whitish color which extends down the breast in line and then broadens across the belly and ends at the undertail coverts. The pigmented parts of its plumage are sooty grays and browns with olive hues. The sides of the breasts and flanks are washed with sooty olive with blotchy streaks. This gives the bird a vested appearance. The markings that most distinguish the bird from the other members of the genus *Contopus* are the two white, cotton-like tufts on its rump. Unfortunately, these tufts can be difficult to see when they are covered by the bird's folded wings. Many of you will have by now recognized the bird in question as one of "our" fairly common birds: *contopus borealis* or Olive-sided Flycatcher.

Like so many birds we consider "our birds," the Olive-sided Flycatcher is only a summer visitor. It nests from the mountains of southern California and Arizona, north to Alaska, across Canada, and down along the east to Tennessee. Its breeding strategy is linked to the long summer days of the Northern Hemisphere. From its preferred perch high atop a snag or conifer, the Olive-sided Flycatcher flies out to

snap up the myriad of insects buzzing on the summer air. Insects are its one and only food source. Migrating north, they are able to exploit the northern summer's sudden burst in insect populations. They are also able to avoid competition for the same food source with birds that remain on the wintering grounds. With long days and an abundant food source, the flycatcher's chances are greatly increased for successfully fledging young.

For us to catch a plane to visit "our bird" on its wintering grounds in Columbia, Venezuela or Peru, would be quite a jaunt. To go under our own power, or even to drive seems almost unthinkable. But, like so many other neotropical migrants, the 7½ inch, one ounce bird's wings carry it back and forth these distances annually. Small land birds in migration can fly 300 km a day and may lose as much as 50% of their body weight, along the way. Of course, a lot of migrating birds don't survive the long trip.

Olive-sided Flycatchers have an average clutch size of three. On a good year they may have two clutches. It would seem that by producing three to six offspring annually, the Olive-sided Flycatcher's population should grow geometrically. The mortality rate among birds is so high that like other birds, the Olive-sided Flycatcher must produce many offspring just to keep the population stable. But the Olive-sided Flycatcher's population is not stable for reasons unknown, it is in decline. Bell's Vireo, Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Short-tailed Albatross are birds that were once commonly seen in California and now their sightings are rare enough to make any Bay Area birder's heart pound. Let's hope a time never comes when an Olive-sided Flycatcher in Golden Gate Park is the first item on the rare bird alert.

Fortunately, Olive-sided Flycatchers

are still fairly easy to see in the Bay Area. The best way to see one is to listen for it. Their song is frequently described as "quick-three-beers." This may be an east coast dialect, to my ears they say "McPherson." A way to remember both their song and spring arrival date is to interpret the song as "What peeves you?" The birds arrive in mid-April just as many of us are paying our taxes and to hear "What peeves you?" sung from the tree top is pleasantly appropriate.

The next time you are walking in Tilden or Golden Gate Park and hear "What peeves you?," look up at that drab 7½ inch bird. Was that the same Olive-sided Flycatcher that was seen in Columbia on the Sabina de Bogota Christmas Count? Was it spotted in La Selva, Costa Rica as it began its migration north? did it nearly get plucked from the sky by a Cooper's Hawk as it flew along the Sierra Madre Occidental in Mexico? Was it nearly nabbed by a cat in a birdbath in Los Angeles? Will it return to its former nesting ground to find that it has been logged? Has its wintering ground suffered the same fate? Will this bird survive to sing "What peeves you?" next year. Consider many of our neotropical migrant populations are in decline. Imagine a spring when there are no neotropical migrants, and think, what peeves you?

ALAN HOPKINS

## HABITAT RESTORATION TEAM

Sponsored jointly by the National Park Service and the Golden Gate National Park Association, the Habitat Restoration Team helps to preserve, restore and maintain the natural diversity and beauty of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. From the May bulletin:

**May 9—OLEMA VALLEY.** Past "Thirteen Curves" on the road up the

Olema Valley there is a very special hillside where native grasses and wildflowers abound. Come to this magic place. Help to keep it healthy by stopping the spread of invasive French broom. If conditions are right, you may also learn about collecting the seeds of native grasses for use in our habitat restoration work."

There are also workdays May 9—Bolinas; May 16—SF Presidio; May 23—Sweeney Ridge; May 30—Tennessee Valley.

The project is coordinated by Greg Archibald. You may call him at (415) 776-1607 x 230 weekdays. Tell him GGAS sent you. Meeting time is 9:30 a.m. every day scheduled. Bring sturdy clothes, work gloves, lunch and something refreshing to drink. If rain is forecast call (415) 388-3106 after 7:30 a.m. the morning of the event to learn if the schedule is modified. There is a hot line, (415) 556-4353 anytime all year. Call to learn what's planned for next Sunday.

## TIME IS SHORT TO SIGN UP



The Golden Gate Raptor Observatory began teaching volunteers to band and identify hawks in the Marin Headlands ten years ago. Today, more than 200 local volunteers annually track the fall flight of more than ten thousand birds of prey near the Golden Gate. The GGRO is currently seeking new volunteers for the 1993 class who can commit one day every two weeks from August through December 1993, along with some evening and weekend trainings.

Volunteers will learn to identify 19 species of hawks, eagles, and falcons, as they participate in banding, counting,

or tracking studies. If you want to be part of this long-term wildlife conservation project, then please attend one of our 1993 Recruitment Meetings. Come either on Thursday, May 6, at 7 p.m., or on Saturday, May 8, at 10 a.m. Both hour-long programs will be held at GGNRA Headquarters, Building 201, Upper Fort Mason, San Francisco. Enter at Franklin and Bay.

For information, call the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory (415) 331-0730.

## LETTER

### MONO LAKE COMMITTEE

Burbank, CA

Dear Art,

Many thanks for the Birdathon contribution to The Mono Lake Committee and our united efforts before the Water Board. You don't know how much it means to us to have your support. Yes, we will want to do a letter writing campaign for the Mono Lake Environmental Impact Report.

Please extend our deepest thanks to everyone who participated in the Birdathon. May we not need to do one in '94!

—MARTHA DAVIS



## MONO LAKE BENEFIT

The Mono Lake Committee invites you to celebrate their Eighth Annual Fine Wine Drawing and dinner on Friday, May 21 at the St. Francis Yacht Club from 6 to 9 p.m.

The event includes a chance to win one of five extraordinary wine cellars, each valued at more than \$500. Also, the evening will honor environmental writer Howard Gilliam of the Chronicle with the first Mono Lake Committee "Defender of the Trust" award.

Only 500 chances to win will be sold; winners need not be present to win.

Tickets are \$50 per person, and anyone purchasing two or more tickets will also have a chance to win a two-day stay at Carmel's luxurious Quail Lodge and Golf Resort and Big Sur's incomparable new Post Ranch Inn. Send your check to Fine Wines, Mono Lake Committee, 1207 West Magnolia Blvd., Suite D, Burbank, CA 91506. For information call Grace de Laet at (415) 331-6855.

## GOLDEN TROUT WORKSHOP

Three one-week Golden Trout Workshop sessions will be held in the Sierra from Aug. 1 through Aug. 21. Sponsored by the members of the Eastern Sierra, Pasadena, San Bernardino Valley and Santa Barbara Audubon Chapters, the workshops offer an informal field natural history program. There are hikes led by resident naturalists and by visiting guest naturalists at some sessions. Located in the Golden Trout Wilderness in the southern High Sierra, it is at an altitude of 10,000 feet. For details, write or call Cindi McKernan, 1230 Friar Lane, Redlands, CA 92373, (909) 793-7897. Reservations should be made as soon as possible.

## NEWS FROM OUR RANCH

Audubon Canyon Ranch (415) 868-9244  
Shoreline Hwy., Stinson Beach, CA 94970  
Wildlife Sanctuaries & Centers for Nature Education  
under joint sponsorship of Golden Gate, Madrone, Marin  
and Sequoia Audubon Societies

Gary Holloway, President

**GOLDEN GATE REPRESENTATIVES ON THE AUDUBON  
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Steven Margolin, *ex officio*

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Bruce Welker

## PUBLIC SEASON

Our public season continues until July 19. If you're a regular at the Ranch you can skip the rest of this and go directly to the spring calendar.

But if you have never been to the Ranch you really should come out and enjoy one of the Bay Area's really great free resources. Just take the half mile walk up the trail to the overlook to see the heronry. It will be active with a half dozen pairs of Great Blue Herons and their young and the Great Egrets will be at the peak of their nesting cycle. many of the wildflowers will be gone, but if you hike the three mile loop trail around Pitcher Canyon you will surely find a few nice displays along your path. The Pacific-slope and Olive-sided Flycatchers, Warbling Vireos, Orange-crowned and Wilson's Warblers, Song Sparrows and Purple Finches will be singing, and if you're lucky you'll hear

a Northern Spotted Owl call from a redwood grove. Be sure to bring your lunch for a picnic in the ranch yard where the swallows will dart overhead as they sweep the sky for their own picnics. Bring your camera and snap a picture of a hummingbird or a quail at the bird blind.

Even if we have a late season storm you can visit our little museum, the Zumwalt Gallery. You won't want to miss the bookstore where you can pick-up ACR volunteer biologist Helen Pratt's new book **THE HERONS AND EGRETS OF AUDUBON CANYON RANCH** (\$10.95). We sell rubber critters, pretty posters, bird or flower earrings, and all sorts of other stuff you don't realize you really need. There's more, but you'll have to discover it for yourself or with the help of one of our volunteer Ranch Guides. The Ranch is located on Bolinas Lagoon about 12 miles south of Olema and about 3 miles north of Stinson Beach.

## SPRING CALENDAR

Check *The GULL* for April for full details about our remaining spring seminars. All seminars require advanced reservations. Please call Edris at (415) 868-9244.

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## — CONTRIBUTORS —

**GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY THANKS THE GENEROUS DONORS** who responded to our January letter. Funds continue to come in. The funds received will be judiciously expended to advance the efforts indicated in the letter.

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## BOUVERIE GUIDED NATURE WALKS

May 1 and 15. All walks begin at 9:30 a.m. and end around 1:30 p.m. Reservations for these free walks are required, so call early. (707) 938-4554.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

If you haven't signed-up to host at the Ranch this season there's still plenty of time. You may call GGAS at 843-2222 to volunteer to greet our weekend visitors or if May is inconvenient just call Edris at (415) 868-9244. This is a great way to help us introduce people to the Ranch, and it's a wonderful way to spend a day.

—DAN MURPHY

## OAKLAND MUSEUM DOCENTS

The Oakland Museum Docent Council is seeking volunteers who are interested in becoming docents in the Gallery of California Art or the Hall of California Ecology (Natural Sciences). Docents are guides who give tours to school children and adult groups.

The art class will take place Mondays 9-11:30 a.m., September 13, 1993—June 13, 1994. The ecology class is scheduled for Tuesdays, 3:30-5:30 p.m., September 14, 1993—June 7, 1994. Both courses will have several additional classes in the fall of 1994. Training classes include lectures, films, field trips and gallery walks with museum curators and staff.

You may call Betsy Willcuts, Docent Coordinator, at 510/238-3514, or write to the Oakland Museum Docent Council, 1000 Oak Street, Oakland, CA 94607, for more information.

## GIFTS and BEQUESTS

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The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use for general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society including Audubon Canyon Ranch of which GGAS is a sponsor. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull* as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.

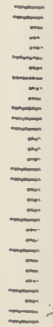


## THE GULL

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